



Image © Naumovski as seen on teepublic.com

HOW TO FEAR NOT

At this pivotal moment in our lives, as we stare down this great darkness that threatens to engulf us at any moment, everyone is justifiably afraid.

We are frightened and worried about many things, and if we are to believe the mainstream media we should be worried about a great deal more.

Here in Canada we are worried about this heat wave we've just had and the lack of rain which has seared the crops; We're worried about the reduced yield and the resulting food shortages that this drought is going to cause; We are worried about the soaring level of crime, violence and unrest, and we are most worried about how our land seems to have been captured by the forces of evil. We are also worried about being outnumbered and whether we have the rank and resolve to be able to force back these demons.

As Christians we can take comfort in knowing that with God at our side we can prevail and get through the most seemingly impossible tests, just as we are told in Psalms, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me...'

That all sounds very nice, but deep down in the pit of our stomachs Satan, rubbing his hands in glee, keeps reminding us that bad things happen to good people – all the time.

That may be so, but when we hear this and are tempted to fall back into our fear-addiction, we need to be strong and put those doubts behind us. Our crucial test right now is firstly to have faith, and secondly to not be afraid.

Both of these are core tenants of the Christian faith, and interestingly 'be not afraid,' 'have no fear,' 'fear not' and the various other variants of this strong advice are, collectively, the most commonly repeated phrases in the Bible.¹ That alone tells us just how important this good advice is.



Another interesting thing is that in ten different passages of the Bible "do not be afraid" is followed by "do not be discouraged." This relationship between being afraid and being discouraged is important to consider as the opposite of discouraged, is encouraged. That is significant because the core meaning of 'encouraged' is 'to be filled with courage.'² So God is telling us directly through the Bible that we must have courage and not

¹ 'Have no fear! Do not be afraid!' by Fr. Felix Just, S.J., PH.D.

² BTU Faith-Powered Fitness.

be afraid of anything.

Now this definitely does sound easier said than done, especially when we consider the wall of terrors bearing down on us. But how much of these terrors are actual 'clear and present dangers' and how much are just perceived threats due to our heightened sense of media-induced anxiety?

It is worth remembering that sheepdogs herd and corral sheep through the fear and anxiety caused by their yapping, barking and snarling. Yet sheepdogs hardly ever actually bite the sheep. This means that the sheep are herded – sometimes to their slaughter – just by a debilitating fear caused by misperception, a lack of courage, and dare I say, a lack of unity in standing up to the threat.



These are all important lessons for us.

Yet, if we are to go back to the Bible we are told that, not matter what worldly threat we are facing, there really is no reason to be afraid. We just need to take the time to understand what we need to do to ensure that God will indeed be at our side and protect us from all these things we fear and worry about.

And it is quite simple, as clearly spelt out in Leviticus Chapter 26, verses 2 to 8:

“Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD. If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit, and you will eat all the food you want and live

in safety in your land. I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country. You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.”

It couldn't be simpler! All we need to do is honour God and follow his commands and he will be with us and will answer our prayers. And all of the things we are most worried about right now (which God has literally listed for us in Leviticus) will be resolved and will melt away.

So, together, lets keep the faith my friends, so we can see, identify and...

FEAR NO EVIL